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ABSTRACT

In order to identify factors which indicate a student would benefit educationally from retention, and to provide information and recommendations to educators, parents, and others involved in the decision to retain a child, this paper addresses the issue of retention in four major areas: the historical basis of retention, negative and positive effects of retention, and decision making models and plans for retention. The introduction presents an exploration of the retention issue, a discussion of the organization and limitations of the review, and a glossary of relevant terms. An annotated bibliography is presented for each of the four areas considered; annotations in the first area are arranged chronologically and annotations in the remaining sections are alphabetical. A summary of the material reviewed and conclusions and recommendations based on the review are presented in the final section. A bibliography is also included. (MCF)

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THE IDENTIFICATION OF STUDENTS WHO WOULD BENEFIT FROM RETENTION

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INTRODUCTION

The retention issue has been debated in education since the introduction of the graded system in the middle of the 19th century. With this effort to standardize education came the problem of students who were not able to meet the expected academic requirements. Thus, repeating a grade once, or more than once was common practice (Lindelow, 1982, p. 471). In 1915, national figures showed retention rates for first graders varying from 2 per cent to over 80 per cent. The additional fact that schools often "double promoted" or accelerated students led to wide age variations in grade levels and high drop-out rates (Brueckner, 1934, p. 289, and Farley, Albin, and Garland, 1933, p. 289). Promotions based on achievement of strict academic standards were not meeting individual needs.

During the depression years, educators became more aware of the importance of the social aspects of education. Social or automatic promotions gained educational acceptance (Thompson, 1980, p. 9). Much research during the 1930's, 1940's, and 1950's supported the social promotion movement. Studies indicated the following: (1) In order for a student to develop maximum abilities, success must be experienced; (2) Failure or fear of failure inhibits development; (3) Individual differences make a single set of academic standards impossible; (4) Grade repetition does not ensure mastery of subject matter;

(5) Retained students represent additional operating costs; (6) Finally, retention causes wide variations in classes with respect to age, physical and social maturity, and interests (Coffield and Blommers, 1956, p. 236).

The shift in promotion policies was not problem-free. Students were progressing with their age-mates, but with greater instances of achieving below grade level skills. Thompson suggested that the policies of social promotion made teaching more difficult because students with problems were no longer dropping out. In 1940, less than 50 per cent of the population had even begun high school. By 1975, over 90 per cent of the population had completed at least 12 years of schooling (Thompson, 1980, p. 10). Compensatory programs, special education classes, nongraded schools, and individualized programs were introduced due to the awareness of individual needs resulting from social promotion. However, these attempts did not assure the prevention of student failure. As Ebel pointed out, many students were allowed to fail who should not have, and much of the individual's responsibility in learning was eliminated (Ebel, 1980, p. 386).

In the 1960's, some educators began to separate the multitude of variables associated with low-achieving students. Ames suggested that as many as one third of the students were overplaced, that is, working with materials and requirements that were beyond their developmental level. She advanced the

argument that immaturity was a cause of low achievement and could be remedied by allowing students an extra year to grow (Ames, 1969). Research (Chase, 1968, p. 174; Reinherz and Griffin, 1970, p. 216; and others) and teacher experience (Curry, 1982, p. 13, and Jablow, 1942, pp. 146-147) tended to support this position. Retention in some instances was becoming educationally acceptable.

With the push for competency testing, popular opinion seemed to be advising a return to retention as a means of assuring academic excellence. By 1980, 33 states had some form of proficiency standards for both elementary and secondary students, and the remaining states had legislation pending or studies commissioned dealing with this subject (Thompson, 1980, p. 26). Plans such as the Greensville Program offered evidence that tougher standards brought results (Owen and Ranick, 1977, p. 533).

Regardless of research findings, educational acceptance, or popular opinion, students have been and are being retained (Dean, 1960, p. 89, and Miller, Frazier, and Richey, 1980, p. 156). It behooves educators to stay abreast of current research and retention plans so that those who are considered for retention can be evaluated and a decision in the student's best interest can be determined.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Educators have come under fire because of prospective graduates being unable to pass basic competency tests. The public wonders how educators can justify promoting a student from grade to grade without retention, and then deny a diploma or grant a diploma to one who cannot function at minimum competency levels demanded by society. The burden of deciding when the basic skills at any grade level are significantly below that level's requirements rests with the classroom teacher.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study was to identify factors which indicate a student would benefit educationally from retention, and provide information and recommendations to educators, parents, and others involved in the decision to retain a child.

ORGANIZATION OF THE STUDY

The study has been divided into four major areas: the historical basis of retention, negative effects of retention, positive effects of retention, and decision-making models and plans for retention. Annotations within the first area have been arranged in chronological order. Annotations in the remaining sections have been arranged alphabetically.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The literature read for this study was not reviewed with the intent of deciding which policy, retention or social promotion, was the more sound educational practice. Literature dealing with the negative aspects of retention was reviewed with the intent of examining who not to retain. Readers wishing to familiarize themselves with the long-standing debate are referred to the extensive bibliography provided by Jackson, 1975.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

acceleration -- "a general term including all administrative practices which result in completing a school program in less than the usual time alloted," (Good, 1973:4).

age, mental (MA) -- "the level of intellectual development expressed as equivalent to the chronological age at which the average child attains that level," (Good, 1973:20).

elementary education -- "the period of formal education beginning in childhood usually at the age of 5 to 7 years, and ending approximately with adolescence," (Good, 1973:209).

grade, primary -- "any one of the first three grades of an elementary school," (Good, 1973:263).

immaturity -- "the state of growing and maturing at a slower rate than normally expected; both mental and physical growth may be influenced in this way," (Good, 1973: 292).

intelligence, average -- "the mean or median of the population in general on a measure of brightness or mental maturity (an I.Q. of 100 is generally accepted as representing average brightness)," (Good, 1973:309).

nonpromotion -- "Failure of a pupil to be promoted to the next higher grade at a regular promotion period," (Good, 1973:387).

promotion -- "the act of shifting a pupil's placement from a lower to a higher grade," (Good, 1973:453).

pupil/student -- "person enrolled in a school, college or university to follow a particular course of studies," (Page and Thomas, 1977:279).

repeater -- "a pupil who has repeated or is currently repeating the work of a grade or part of a subject at some designated level of difficulty," (Good, 1973: 490).

retardation, educational -- "Failure to develop as rapidly or as far as the average in scholastic ability," (Good, 1973:499).

retention -- see nonpromotion.

ANNOTATIONS

THE HISTORICAL BASIS OF RETENTION

Keyes, Charles H., Progress Through the Grades of City Schools, Teachers College Contributions to Education, No. 42, New York, Bureau of Publications, Teachers College, Columbia University, 1911, 79 pp.

Keyes stated purpose of this study was to determine what factors facilitate or hamper school progress. A supervision district of New York schools was the field of study. Approximately 5,000 students in the nine years above kindergarten level were included. Entrance age was a factor for retained and accelerated students. The median entrance age for accelerated students was 6.3 years and 50 per cent of students entering before age five were retained, 49 per cent of students entering after the age of 7.6 years were retained. Retained students had larger percentages of absences. Accelerated and retained students tended to run in families. Nearly 50 per cent of all retainees were weak in all subjects, or all subjects except spelling. Keyes concluded that retention does not result in any permanent scholastic improvement. Twenty-one per cent of retained students did better after retention, 39 per cent showed no difference, and 40 per cent did worse.

Brueckner, L. J., "The Cumulative Effects of the Policy of Non-failing," Journal of Educational Research 28:289-290, December, 1934.

Brueckner reported that serious curriculum and instructional problems were beginning to arise because many schools were promoting on an age basis rather than on strict achievement standards. There were more students in the middle grades of elementary school who were weak readers and larger numbers of non-readers. Some schools had lowered arithmetic standards to the detriment of average and accelerated students. Brueckner did not suggest returning to a policy of excessive failures. He reported that in 1915 failures in schools across the nation ranged from two per cent to over 80 per cent for first grade classes. The net effect of strict promotion policies was extreme overagedness and high drop-out rates. He did urge an analysis of the implications of non-failing and special adaptations based on the findings.

Goodland, John I., "Research and Theory Regarding Promotion and Nonpromotion," Elementary School Journal 53:150-155, November, 1952.

Goodland reviewed 21 pieces of literature dating back to a study by Charles H. Keyes in 1911. As promotion practices relate to achievement, the studies indicated that retained students do no better than promoted students of like ability. Nonpromotion does not reduce the range of abilities that a teacher must deal with in the classroom. The studies cited disagreed on the effect of promotion practices on behavior. Some studies concluded that nonpromoted students were likely to cause disciplinary problems, and another maintained that the frustration caused by inability to do the work caused promoted students to become disciplinary problems. Promoted students seemed to have better personal and social adjustments in most, but not all areas. Goodland concluded from the research that promotion is the more defensible educational practice, but that a blanket policy of promotion would not serve the needs of all students.

Dean, Stuart E., "Pass or Fail? A Study of Promotion Policy," Elementary School Journal 61:86-90, November, 1960.

Dean reported the results of a nationwide study conducted for the Office of Education during the 1958-1959 school year. Surveyed were 4,284 urban (population 2,500 or above) schools. Administrators were asked to rate their promotion policies in relation to academic achievements and social promotions. Seventy per cent of the schools polled reported that promotion was either primarily or exclusively based on academic achievement. This policy was fairly evenly distributed among the four population size groups and the four geographic regions. Less than 12 per cent of the schools based policies primarily or exclusively on social promotion.

Ames, Louise Bates, Is Your Child in the Wrong Grade?, Harper and Row, New York, 1966, 145 pp.

Ames opened her book with the statement that as many as one of every three children may be "overplaced" (in the wrong grade) according to research conducted at the Gesell Institute. This is a result of admitting children to kindergarten on the basis of chronological rather than behavior age. Average girls need to be fully five before entering kindergarten and boys fully five and one-half. Requirements of school curriculums were found to be high even for superiorly endowed children. Ames suggested that rather than down-grading educational requirements, systems test more carefully for readiness. The research showed that children who began too early did not "catch up", that behaviorally, a child matures only one year in a year's time. A high I.Q. or early reading ability do not guarantee proper behavior level placement. Ames advised that it is never too late to repeat a grade if overplacement has occured. The benefits of retention will far outshadow any initial trauma encountered because of repeating. A check list for deciding if a child is overplaced was included (pp. 80-81).

Reiter, Robert G., The Promotion/Retention Dilemma: What Research Tells Us. Report No. 7416, Educational Resources Information Center, Ed 099 412, Philadelphia: Office of Research and Evaluation, Philadelphia School District, December, 1973, 23 pp.

Reiter evaluated research and concluded that schools cannot rely on nonpromotion to improve scholastic achievement. Social promotion was not highly rated either. This policy gave students a false sense of the abilities, and even when promoted, low-achieving students were deemed maladjusted because of being at the scholastic bottom of a class. Reiter found social promotion to be somewhat less inadequate than retention. He advised that the atmosphere in which a child is promoted or retained is more important than the policy. The ideal of avoiding failure has not been achieved because of the multitude of variables beyond the schools' control. Reiter suggested a more practical policy which favors promotion, but makes exceptions for purposeful retentions in the primary grades.

Jackson, Gregg B., "The Research Evidence on the Effects of Grade Retention," Review of Educational Research 45:613-635, Fall, 1975.

Jackson reviewed 44 pieces of original research dating from 1911 to 1973. The studies were divided into three general types. Type I was the most commonly used and compared retained students with promoted students. This type biased the results toward promotion. Type II compared retained students before and after retention. This type of design is biased to show that retention is less harmful and more beneficial than promotion. Type III was an experimental design in which potential retainees were randomly promoted or retained. There were three studies using the experimental design, the most recent dated 1941. Only one of these had statistically significant results. That study favored promotion. The non-significant results favored retention with a 22 to 17 ratio. Jackson called for more studies using an experimental approach which sample a large and diverse population, investigate both long and short term effects, and minimize the influence of other variables.

Bocks, William M., "Non-Promotion: A Year to Grow?," Educational Leadership 34:379-383, February, 1977.

Bocks concluded in his review of selected research that retention was not beneficial and often harmful. The studies indicated that students who repeat generally do no better academically and a substantial number do worse in the repeated grade. Retention does not insure mastery of material or reduce the range of abilities in upper elementary classrooms. The research findings reviewed did not support social maturity as a justification for retention. Overaged children were less accepted by classmates than those who were regularly promoted. Bocks contended that individualizing school programs can remove the need for retention or "a year to grow".

Taylor, Bob L., "Effects of Minimum Competencies on Promotion Standards," Educational Leadership 36:23-26, October, 1978.

Taylor stated that educators have long supported promotion standards based on the individual's progress. He saw the advocacy of minimum competencies as a public cry to graduate more students with minimum survival skill rather than a demand to fail students. Using the Oregon Graduation Requirements of 1973, he outlined the means for aiding students in meeting these minimum standards. He placed the majority of the responsibility for deciding whether basic competencies had been met on classroom teachers. He advocated more programs for diagnosing, remediating, and evaluating student progress. More alternative programs for students with special needs were deemed necessary. The new competency laws will make necessary a greater stress on meeting individual needs.

Thompson, Margery, "Because Schools Are Burying Social Promotion, Kids Must Perform to Pass," American School Board Journal 166:30-32, January, 1979.

Thompson reported that the move away from social promotion was occuring with speed uncharacteristic of educational change. The turn of events began in 1973 with the Greensville County, Virginia School System which required students to pass standardized tests before advancing to the next grade. The trend toward increased retentions continued across the nation. In Caroline County, Maryland, the 1968 rate of retention was 2.3 per cent. In 1973, the school board adopted the policy of retaining children once in grades K-3 if remedial work was needed, and again in grades 4-6 if necessary. The third grade rate of retention in 1978 was 5.7 per cent. This district found that most retentions were occuring in the primary grades. While parents expressed a desire for tougher standards, they often resisted retention policies when their child was involved. The key to tougher promotion policies is explaining the policies thoroughly and continuously thereby preparing parents before the retention occurs.

Miller, Maurice; Frazier, Catherine C.; and Richey, D. Dean, "Student Nonpromotion and Teacher Attitude," Contemporary Education 51:155-157, Spring, 1980.

Miller, Frazier, and Richey interviewed 150 elementary, secondary, and special education teachers asking their attitudes toward retention. Sixty-nine per cent had requested a student be retained, 63 per cent within the past three years. Thirty-seven per cent had not read any research or literature dealing with retention. General conclusions were difficult to reach because of the wide variety of responses. Teachers tended to disagree that retention increases subject-matter mastery, there is a typical personality type among retained students, and absences and mild deficits should be used as criteria for retention. The interviewed group tended to disagree strongly with statements that students should never be retained or should be retained only in primary grades. Most teachers felt a student's self-concept and attitude toward retention should be factors considered in a decision to retain.

Thompson, Sydney, "Grade Retention and Social Promotion," A.C.S.A. School Management Digest, Series 1, No. 20, Educational Resources Information Center, Ed 189 681, Association of California School Administrators, Oregon University, Eugene Oregon, ERIC Clearinghouse on Educational Management, December, 1980, 30 pp.

Thompson reported grade retention came into existence as a means of maintaining the graded school system instituted in the middle of the 19th century. During the Depression years, schools began to shift to policies of automatic promotion. Thompson felt the job of schools has become more difficult because problem students were no longer eliminated. In 1940, less than 50 per cent of the population had even begun high school. By 1975, more than 90 per cent had completed at least 12 years of schooling. The issue of social promotion and retention has remained because of no conclusive research. Thompson blamed poor research designs. After reviewing pertinent research, Thompson concluded that the best policies for promotion are ones which accept social promotion as the rule with occasional exceptions made for immature students in early grades.

Lindelow, John, "Synthesis of Research on Grade Retention and Social Promotion," Educational Leadership 39:471-473, March, 1982.

In this review of research, Lindelow concluded that the debate over retention and promotion policies will continue as it has since the middle of the 19th century when graded schools were instituted. Neither retention or social promotion will solve the problems of low-achieving students. Research has been faulty because the experimental ideal of randomly assigning low-achieving students to promoted and retained groups has not been attempted. The reluctance to try this method is understandable when the child's best interest is the most important factor. Students who gain the most from an in-grade retention are those whose progress is less than one year and not greater than two years or when a student is categorized as immature in the primary grades.

Lehr, Fran, "Grade Repetition vs. Social Promotion," Reading Teacher 36:234-237, November, 1982.

Lehr reviewed ten pieces of literature dealing with the promotion vs. retention issue. The studies dated from 1973 to 1981 and showed mixed results. Two of the articles did not attempt to take sides in the issue. Three studies reported negative effects of retention. The results of five studies indicated that students gained from repeating a grade. The McAfee study conducted in 1981 showed retention as valuable for elementary students, but not for junior high students. In light of the current cry for tougher standards and abandonment of social promotion policies, Lehr urged changing school policy because it meets the needs of students, not because it quiets criticism.

NEGATIVE EFFECTS OF RETENTION

Abidin, Richard R.; Golladay, Wendy M.; and Haverton, Anna L., "Elementary School Retention: An Unjustifiable, Discriminatory, and Noxious Educational Policy," Journal of School Psychology 9:410-417, Winter, 1971.

Abidin, Golladay, and Haverton studied students from the sixth grade. Eighty-five students who had been retained in either the first or second grades were compared with 43 regularly promoted students who had scored below the 25th percentile on the Metropolitan Readiness Test. Data were collected from the six grades from school records. Both groups were compared in terms of sex, race, initial intelligence, socio-economic level, and family make-up. The data indicated that there was no negative or positive short-term effect of retention. However, over the long-term, the retained group's academic achievement declined relative to the promoted group. The ability of the retained group was higher at the outset, but by fourth grade, the mean I.Q. was 7.7 points below the promoted group, and by sixth grade, was 11.2 points below. Retention was considered a discriminatory policy against the poor because 63 per cent of the mothers of retained students worked and could not fight for their children's social promotion.

Anfinson, Rudolph D., "School Progress and Pupil Adjustment," Elementary School Journal 41:501-514, March, 1941.

Anfinson's investigation was carried out in four Minneapolis junior high schools. Students who had not been retained were matched with those who had repeated one or more semesters. One hundred sixteen pairs resulted when matched on the basis of attendance, chronological age, sex, intelligence, and socio-economic status. Approximately 50 per cent of retentions were in first grade. The Symonds-Block Student Questionnaire and the Bell School Inventory were administered. The first measured personal and social adjustment toward school, home, and associates. The second described attitudes toward school. Scores on the Questionnaire were statistically significant with a critical ratio of 3.40. Promoted students were favored. Forty-five per cent of promoted students and 61 per cent of retained students were below average in adjustment. The results of the Inventory were not statistically significant.

Arthur, Grace, "A Study of the Achievement of 60 Grade 1 Repeaters as Compared with that of Non-Repeaters of the Same Mental Age," Journal of Experimental Education 5:203-205, December, 1936.

Arthur's sixty repeating subjects in this study ranged in I.Q. from 56 to 117 with a median score of 84. Year-end achievement on the Haggerty Primary Reading Test was compared with 418 nonrepeating students of the same mental age as measured by the Kuhlmann-Binet. Neither repeaters or nonrepeaters with a mental age of 6.0 or less met the norms for the end of grade one. The repeaters who began the year with a 6.5 mental age or less (40 students) did as well as nonrepeaters of the same mental age. All of the repeaters (20 students) with a mental age of 6.5-8.0 did not meet the means for nonrepeating students. Combining results, the repeating students achieved 99.3 as much as nonrepeaters of the same ability. Arthur concluded that the average repeater learned no more in two years than the average nonrepeaters did in one. She suggested that it would have been wiser to postpone the teaching of reading until the appropriate intellectual maturity was reached.

Bedoian, Vagharsh H., "Social Acceptability and Social Rejection of the Underage, At-Age and Overage Pupils in the Sixth Grade," Journal of Educational Research 47:513-520, March, 1954.

Bedoian studied the social acceptability of 743 sixth grade students in 22 classes. Scores on a four-question sociometric test were compared for underage, at-age, and overage students. Students who were nine months above or below the mean chronological age of half-grade placement were considered overaged or underaged respectively. Underaged students received the highest acceptability ratings and were most often among the "stars of attraction" (those receiving the highest acceptance scores). Overaged students received the highest rejection scores and the lowest acceptance scores. They were more often among "rejectees" (those receiving the highest rejection scores) than the other two groups. The data from a class comprised of only overaged students indicated that they gain a higher status in this type of class than when combined with the other two groups.

Coffield, William H. and Blommers, Paul, "Effects of Non-Promotion on Educational Achievement in the Elementary School," Journal of Educational Psychology 47:235-250, April, 1956.

Coffield and Blommers studied seventh grade students from Iowa using the Iowa Basic Skills Test who had repeated one year, third year or above. First and second grade repeaters were not included in this study. Achievement was studied without regard to maturity, chronological age, or other variables. Failed students were compared with themselves and with promoted matchees. The findings indicated that slow learning students who repeat perform at about the same level as those who are promoted when their performances are judged at a higher grade level. The progress of once-retained seventh graders was about the same as normally promoted seventh graders. The progress of once-retained seventh was about eight months less than regularly promoted eighth graders who had spent the same number of years in school. Retained students generally gained six months progress in the repeated year and one year three months during the two years following retention. Neither of these gains brought the scores to the norms for the grade level.

Dobbs, Virginia, and Neville, Donald, "The Effects of Non-Promotion on the Achievement of Groups Matched from Retained First Graders and Promoted Second Graders," The Journal of Educational Research 60:472-475, July/August, 1967.

Thirty pairs of first and second grade students were matched on race, sex, socio-economic level, classroom assignment (homogenous, etc.), age, mental ability, and reading ability. Each retained first grader was paired with a promoted second grader. During the first year, the promoted group's achievement gains for reading (.62) and arithmetic (1.14) were found to be significantly greater than the retained group's (.32 and .69 respectively). Over a two-year period, data on the 24 remaining pairs showed the promoted group significantly higher in reading and arithmetic gains while the gains in reading achievement for both groups were significant. Dobbs and Neville pointed out in their discussion of the study that low-achieving students will meet failure whether retained or promoted unless the classroom situation is adjusted to meet their needs.

Farley, Eugene S.; Albin, J. Frey; and Garland, Gertrude, "Factors Related to the Grade Progress of Pupils," Elementary School Journal 34:186-193, November, 1933.

Farley, Albin, and Garland felt their study revealed the importance of continuous progress through the grades. They examined all twelve-year-old students (193) in two Newark schools ranging from grades four through eight. Median mental ages, I.Q. scores, and achievement test scores increased with grade placement. There were obvious discrepancies where several students in lower grades had higher mental ages and achievement scores than those in higher grades. It was assumed that factors other than ability and achievement had caused these retentions. No significant relation was found between grade placement and socio-economic level or health. There was some relation between character ratings and grade placement. Larger numbers of students in the upper grades received higher character ratings. No cause for the variation of scores was cited.

Gredler, Gilbert R., "A Look At Some Important Factors In Assessing Readiness for School," Journal of Learning Disabilities 11:284-290, May, 1978.

Foreign studies indicated a slightly higher per cent of poor readers than American schools. The countries cited in these studies have school entrance age of seven. American studies have produced a nonsignificant relationship between failure and being underaged. Gredler compared retention rates in two Pennsylvania schools and found great differences, concluding that schools need to compare year to year gains for students rather than absolute performances. He stated that schools should accept students as they are and make provisions to deal with problems that may arise later. He urged parents to demand appropriate grade level placement for students who differ only three to eleven months in chronological age from prospective classmates.

Koons, Clair L., "Nonpromotion: A Dead-end Road," Phi Delta Kappan :701-702, May, 1977.

Koons contended promoting students to the next grade when basic competency levels have not been achieved does not deny them a chance to learn. He proposed that schools instead must upgrade programs and provide for individual differences of students within the appropriate age-peer groupings. Koons stated that impressive results from schools practicing nonpromotion policies might be due to the Hawthorne Effect. Anything different is likely to produce positive results for a short time. He saw the move away from use of nonpromotion over the past 50 years as good, and indicated that research in that time span showed that promoted low-achieving students scored higher on achievement tests than retained students after an additional year in a grade. He stated that harsh, rigid standards degrade students.

McElwee, Edna Willis, "A Comparison of the Personality Traits of 300 Accelerated, Normal, and Retarded Children," Journal of Educational Research 26:31-34, September, 1932.

McElwee asked teachers of grades two, three, and four to indicate how normal, accelerated, and retarded students rated on 14 characteristics. Seven of the characteristics were considered desirable and seven, undesirable. Accelerated students were those who had skipped one or more terms. Retarded students were those who had been retained one or more terms. In general, the accelerated group possessed more of the desirable characteristics than did the retarded group. The reverse was true of the undesirable characteristics. The retarded group showed a marked difference from the accelerated group in indifference in school work and good effort by a ratio of 32 to 1 and 40 to 82 respectively.

Morrison, Ida E. and Perry, Ida F., "Acceptance of Overage Children by Their Classmates," Elementary School Journal 56:217-220, January, 1956.

Morrison studied 177 fifth and sixth graders in suburban areas of Santa Barbara County, California. Twenty-one of these were overage (a year or more older than the median age for the class). Eighty-six per cent of the overage students were below the medians of their classes in sociometric status. Perry studied 568 students in grades four through eight in suburban areas of Sacramento, California. Ten overage students out of 128 in grades five and six were reviewed separately so that results could be compared with the Morrison study. Ninety per cent of the overage students fell below the medians for their classes in sociometric status. The differences in sociometric status for grades seven and eight were not highly significant. Other factors such as athletic ability seemed to compensate for the age differences at these levels.

Plumber, D. L., The Impact of Retention on the Social Development of Elementary School Children, Educational Resources Information Center, Ed 222 275, Master's Thesis, University of Georgia, 1982, 68 pp.

Plumber questioned 219 second and fifth grade students in a northern rural Georgia system regarding perceptions of themselves and their peers. Forty-six per cent of the population questioned had been retained. Plumber stated that school is second only to home in self-concept building, and the "Back to Basics" move threatens the socialization process. It was predicted that retained children would have less favorable expectations about themselves. The data did not support this claim, in fact, second grade retainees had higher self-expectations than non-retainees. It was predicted that retained students would have lower self-concepts than nonretained students. Retained students had significantly higher self-concepts than those not retained. It was predicted that retained students would be recipients of discriminatory acts and receive less rewards. There was some support for this prediction. Plumber felt the high ratio of retained students influenced the findings.

Sadin, Adolph A., Social and Emotional Adjustments of Regularly Promoted and Non-Promoted Pupils, Child Development Monographs, No. 32, New York, Bureau of Publications, Teachers College, Columbia University, 1944, 142 pp.

Sadin concluded that nonpromoted students were, in general, less adjusted socially than regularly promoted students. The 416 students (139 retained) included in this study were from five elementary schools in Wallingford, Connecticut. Two classes from each grade level, one through eight were selected. The average I.Q. of promoted students was 110.8. The average I.Q. of retained students was 88.5. Retained students were more likely to choose friends from upper grades and did not receive social acceptance as readily as regularly promoted students. They were placed among students who were younger, smaller, and less physically mature. Retained students were judged by teachers to be more troublesome during school hours. Twenty-five per cent of the retained group and five per cent of regularly promoted were judged to be problem students. Approximately 40 per cent of repeaters and 13 per cent of regularly promoted students wished to quit school as soon as possible. More than 40 per cent of all students had heard retained students teased about not being promoted.

White, Kinnard, and Howard, James Lee, "Failure to be Promoted and Self-Concept Among Elementary School Children," Elementary School Guidance and Counseling 7:182-187, 1973.

White and Howard studied 614 sixth grade students from North Carolina schools. Of these students, 519 (84 per cent) had never been retained, 73 (12 per cent) had been retained once, and 22 (4 per cent) had been retained two or more times. The Tennessee Self-Concept Scale was administered to determine if there was an association between retention and self-concept. The highest mean score showing a more positive self-concept was obtained by those students who had not been retained. Mean scores were lower when one retention was experienced, and the lowest when two or more grades had been repeated. There was no difference in the manner in which retention affected boys and girls. Scale items analyzed using the Scheffe procedure indicated that the most continuous and severe effects of retention occured between no failure and two or more failure groups. Significant differences between no failure and one retention groups were found on four of nine items.

POSITIVE EFFECTS OF RETENTION

Ames, Louise Bates, "Retention: A Step Forward," Early Years 11:10-11, December, 1980.

Ames stated that retention can positively influence a child's self-confidence and emotional well-being by placing a child where the work load is comfortable. She cited a study by Verne Lewis of Jefferson, Iowa who questioned over 400 parents of students who had been retained. In this study, 87 per cent of parents felt that the good effects of retention outweighed the bad and 88 per cent would make the retention decision again. An earlier study by Ames showed that retention is usually not accompanied by emotional or social problems when the retention is a result of immaturity. This study involved questioning parents and teachers of retained students. She pointed out that retention would not solve all academic performance problems. Ames felt that parents must be convinced of the benefits of retention before the child is advised of the retention. They can then assure the child that the fault lies with them or the school for placing the child in the wrong grade. The child's emotional reaction to retention depends on how the news is presented.

Ames, Louise Bates and Gillespie, Clyde, "The Cure of Overplacement," Instructor 2:81-83, October, 1970.

Ames and Gillespie contended that as long as an arbitrary entrance age is set for school admission, there will be many children who are not ready for school when they begin. That being the case, they suggested retention for immature students. They rebutted many of the oppositions to retention such as people seeing the child as dumb. Maturing and intelligence develop separately. They also pointed out that research conducted in the 1930's and 1940's indicating negative effects of retention included retentions for all reasons, not just immaturity. Ames and Gillespie did not recommend retention for children who are low-achieving for other reasons. They stated that what adults (parents and teachers) do and say will greatly affect the manner in which a child accepts repeating a grade.

Chansky, Norman M., "Progress of Promoted and Repeating Grade I Failures," The Journal of Experimental Education 32:226-235, Spring, 1964.

Chansky compared 63 first graders considered for retention in four school districts in Ulster, New York. Thirty were promoted and 33 were retained. The promoted group was more able mentally and had a higher mental age. Both groups were deemed maladjusted. After seven months of school, the groups were tested again. The promoted group made a half year greater gain in vocabulary and reading comprehension. Gains in math were the same for both groups. While the promoted group was found to be more advanced, the retained group deviated less from mental age expectancy than did the promoted group. So, relative to ability, the retained group achieved more satisfactorily than the promoted group. At the study's end, both groups remained maladjusted with some gains for some personality attributes for both groups. The retainees were slightly less maladjusted than the low achievers who were promoted. Chansky concluded that achievements and personality deficits were neither a function of promotion or retention.

Chase, Joan A., "A Study of the Impact of Grade Retention on Primary School Children," Journal of Psychology 70:169-177, November, 1968.

Chase questioned parents and teachers of 65 repeating first, second, and third graders who had been retained because of immaturity. Teachers felt that 75 per cent of the students' needs had been met by the retention. Teachers also reported that 94 per cent of the students had no or only temporary emotional upset because of repeating. According to parental interviews, no child was reported to feel less confident about school or be less happy than the previous year. One child was reported to have more negative feelings, and two children had more trouble with playmates. Visual-motor ability for first graders on the second testing showed them 5.0 months ahead of their classmates, but 6 months below their chronological peers. While the second and third graders made appropriate gains, they were still 3.7 and 7.0 months behind classmates respectively. Chase concluded that retained first graders had a better chance of competing successfully than those moved to second and third grades before repeating.

Curry, Mildred, "Held Back In Kindergarten," Early Years 13:3, December, 1982.

Curry stated that the only real reason for retention in kindergarten is immaturity. Signs of immaturity were listed as distractibility, short attention span, lack of gross and fine motor control, lagging social development, and under-developed visual perception and eye-hand coordination. Curry pointed out that immaturity is not a sign of "dumbness". Because of entrance requirements, some children may be almost a year younger than classmates which means one-fifth less time to grow. Boys are typically six months developmentally behind girls. Curry felt that a child's reaction to retention depended on the parent's reaction to it. She reported that retention has proved a positive experience for all immature students in her classroom experience. Because of requests, this article was reprinted. It first appeared in the Spring, 1976, issue of Early Years Parent and will be included in the 1983 Parent Annual.

Di Pasquale, Glenn W.; Moule, Allan D.; and Flewelling, Robert W., "The Birthdate Effect," Journal of Learning Disabilities 13:234-238, May, 1980.

The characteristics of students who had been referred to a psychological service in a Canadian system were evaluated by Di Pasquale, Moule, and Flewelling. The sample included 552 students from grades K-13. The grade levels were fairly evenly distributed except for grade one and high school. First graders were referred twice as often as other grades. High school students were referred about half as often. One hundred eighteen students were referred for social, emotional, or behavioral problems, and 434 for academic problems. The kindergarten entrance age was five years on or before December 31. The numbers of students referred increased going from late (first four months of the year) to early (last four months of the year) birthdates with a correlation of .02. The birthdate effect was most apparent for boys at the primary level who were referred for academic reasons.

Donofrio, A. F., "Grade Repetition: Therapy of Choice," Journal of Learning Disabilities 10:349-351, June/July, 1977.

Donofrio listed a group of factors which would indicate a student would benefit from "marking time" for a year so the student's psychological "wave frequency" would be in step with that of grade-level classmates. Sex was cited as a factor because of the maturational lag between males and females. The quarter of the year in which a child's birthday falls was listed as a factor. Late maturation and verbal difficulties caused by congenital or bilingual problems are often factors. Another consideration was low I.Q. (80's and low 90's). Special programs are available for students below this range. Hyperkinesis accompanied by a maturational lag can be considered justification for retention. Donofrio claimed when these factors are clearly in evidence, a student's poor achievement can be easily dealt with by retention.

Ebel, Robert L., "The Failure of Schools Without Failure," Phi Delta Kappan 61:386-388, February, 1980.

Ebel stated that schools which have not allowed students to fail have removed the incentive to succeed, and have in fact, allowed those to fail who should not fail. Individualized instruction, diagnosis and remediation, mastery learning, and even excellent teaching cannot prevent failure. The student's responsibility in learning must be recognized. No school or teacher can take all credit for a student's success, and neither should they assume all responsibility for failure. The school's responsibility is to provide a favorable environment for learning by having good teachers, a wide variety of materials, a means of rewarding success in learning, and examples of willing learners. Ebel suggested that students who cannot succeed after the best efforts of the school and parents combined should drop out, or the school should have the option of dismissing them.

Finlayson, H. J., "Nonpromotion and Self-Concept Development," Phi Delta Kappan 59:205-206, November, 1977.

Finlayson conducted a longitudinal study of the effect of nonpromotion on the self-concept of students in the primary grades during the 1973-74 and 1974-75 school years. The initial research included 585 first grade students from two suburban school districts near Philadelphia. The second year of the study compared the self-concepts of 25 children in each of three groups - non-promoted, borderline, and promoted students. After being retained, the non-promoted group continued to increase their self-concept scores significantly while scores for borderline and promoted students dropped slightly. Teachers observed that 96 per cent of non-promoted students held stable or more positive self-concepts during the repeated school year. Parents reported that repeating students were more confident and successful than the previous year (79.2 per cent), and there was no stigma attached to the retention (91.7 per cent). Parents viewed the retention as having a positive effect, and most would make the same decision again. Nonpromotion does not appear to be a negative influence on self-concept according to this study.

Jablow, Lillian, "Deferred Promotions in Grade One," Baltimore Bulletin of Education 24:146-147, December, 1947.

Jablow described a class of 40 first grade students assigned to her in February of 1947. Twelve students were just beginning the reading program, and five were unable to speak simple sentences, name three primary colors, or associate animals and names. These five had health, home, or behavior problems, which compounded their immaturity. After ten months, the group of twelve was working independently, ready to read at the primer level, and writing numbers to 30. The five slowest were able to generate original sentences, identify the eight basic colors, and write numbers to ten. They were beginning the first pre-primer reading level. None of these students had reached levels appropriate for second grade placement, but each had exhibited real growth. Although these students were to be retained, Jablow would not label them "failures".

Kerzner, Randi L., The Effect of Retention on Achievement, Educational Resources Information Center, Ed 216 309, M.A. Thesis, Kean College of New Jersey, May, 1982, 34 pp.

Kerzner's study included 56 students grades one through five who had been retained and had completed at lease one year beyond the retained grade. Scores on the Comprehensive Tests of Basic Skills were compared during the retention year and the year following. Kerzner hypothesized that there would be no significant academic achievement in the retained year. Retention was found to be beneficial in all grades included in the study. Retention was most beneficial to students in grades one, two, and three. On the basis of these results, the hypothesis was rejected.

Lobdell, Lawrence O., "Results of a Nonpromotion Policy in One School District," Elementary School Journal 54:333-337, February, 1954.

Lobdell reported results of academic progress of 94 repeating students in his district, Union Free School District Number 30 in Valley Stream, New York. Sixty-nine of the students had made good or fair progress during the repeating year and after where data were available. Sixteen of the students had entered at an age below that set as minimum entrance age at the time of the study. Of these 16, eight had made good progress and five had made fair progress since repeating. Lobdell believed that the improved results over other studies to date were due to definite criteria established in his district for the promotion and nonpromotion of students. General criteria included such guidelines as not repeating more than one grade and not repeating with the same teacher. Specific criteria included such factors as teacher's assessment, achievement test scores, I.Q., chronological age, and parental attitude toward their child's progress.

McAfee, Jackson K., Towards a Theory of Promotion: Does Retaining Students Really Work?, Educational Resources Information Center, Ed 204 871, April, 1981, 30 pp.

McAfee rejected the feasibility of an experimental research design and urged exploring other types of unbiased research on the promotion vs. retention issue. He used the Model A design required by Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act to conduct a two-year study of a district which had instituted a new promotion policy during the 1977-1978 year. Model A is a pretest/posttest design with test scores expressed as a normal curve equivalent. The model assumed that, if given no treatment, a group will remain at the same percentile rank from one year to the next as measured on standardized achievement tests. Comparing posttest performance against no-treatment expectations, the value of the policy was measured. Using this approach, and applying Roberts regression formula, the data indicated that retention had a beneficial effect in the elementary grades, but no effect at the junior high level.

Reinherz, Helen and Griffin, Carol Lee, "The Second Time Around: Achievement and Progress of Boys Who Repeated One of the First Three Grades," The School Counselor 17:213-218, January, 1970.

Reinherz and Griffin studied 57 boys from Quincy, Massachusetts who were repeating one of the first three grades. The purpose of the study was to compare the characteristics of students who made academic progress with those who did not. Progress was based on performance in relation to the failed year's work. Thirty-six students earned satisfactory achievement, while 21 had poor or fair. Every student made some progress. Forty-five of the students were classified as immature were ranked as making satisfactory progress (.05 level of significance). There was also a significant association (.05) between the grade retained and satisfactory achievement. Eighty-four per cent of first graders made satisfactory progress while 50 per cent of second and third graders had fair or poor achievement. Children rated as having good social and emotional adjustment and good peer relationships tended to make satisfactory progress. Satisfactory progress was negatively associated with students involved in guidance or special programs.

Ridgway, Robert, "...And One to Grow On." Educational Leadership 17:313-317, February, 1960.

Ridgway described a program in Kansas which gave selected students an extra year in kindergarten, different from the previous year. When these students reached third grade, they were compared with students who were deemed immature in kindergarten, but did not attend the special class. The experimental group was found to be significantly higher at the .01 level in reading comprehension and vocabulary. Arithmetic reasoning favored the experimental group with a level of significance of .05. There was no apparent difference in arithmetic computation. Teachers interviewed felt children in the experimental group had a better sense of their worth and seemed to be under less pressure. Ridgway described another special class in Hutchinson, Kansas which fell between traditional third and fourth grade classes. Data were not yet available for this program.

Sandoval, Jonathan, and Huges, G. Penee, Success in Non-Promoted First Grade Children, Final Report, Educational Resources Information Center, Ed 212 371, California University, Davis, Department of Education, June, 1981, 212 pp.

The primary purpose of the study conducted by Sandoval and Huges was to determine who would benefit from retention by identifying factors which lent to success in the retained year. Of 146 first graders who were considered for retention, 84 were retained and 62 were promoted. The best predictors of success in the retained year were initial average status in academic skills, emotional development, and social skills. Successful retainees had average I.Q.s and parents who were involved with the school and exhibited a positive attitude about retention. Non-significant factors were physical size, visual-motor development, family background, early life, and teacher philosophy. In this study, 38 per cent of retainees were successful in the retained year. These students were in the top third of their classes. There were significant differences in self-concept scores between retained and promoted students. This lead Sandoval and Huges to suggest that perhaps it is better to be retained than to be at the bottom of a second grade class.

Scott, Betty A., and Ames, Louise Bates, "Improved Academic, Personal, and Social Adjustment in Selected Primary School Repeaters," Elementary School Journal 69:431-438, May, 1969.

Scott and Ames compared grades and interviewed parents and teachers of 27 elementary school children ages five to twelve who had repeated because of immaturity. Immaturity was defined as chronological youngness or developmental age below chronological age. All children received improved academic marks in the repeating year. Statistically significant improvement was shown in attitude toward work, ability to complete written work, getting along with classmates, lessening of fatigue, quickness in getting ready for school, and sense of responsibility. General health showed improvement, although not to a significant degree. Scott and Ames suggested that negative effects of retention shown in studies in the 1930's and 1940's may have been because repeating children with low I.Q.s, emotional or learning disabilities were included.

Stringer, Lorene A., "Report on a Retentions Program," Elementary School Journal 60:370-375, April, 1960.

Stringer reported on a retention program used by the Bayless School District, Missouri. While the program was not to be considered a controlled experiment, the report did measure results in changes in academic performance on the Stanford Achievement Test. No other variables were measured. Students made better progress during the retention than the year before, but progress declined in the year after repeating. Factors which indicated a child would gain by repeating were scores of 1.0 to 1.9 below grade level before retention (grades one and two, a lag of 0.3 and 0.7 respectively) and a rate of progress less than 50 per cent of normal (progressing a year in a year's time regardless of grade level). Students who fell within these same guidelines, but were socially promoted did well in the promoted year when parents made a conserted effort to help their children. This group also showed a decline in progress the year after the social promotion.

DECISION-MAKING MODELS AND PLANS FOR RETENTION

Brown, E. L., "Retention: The Team Approach (Use of Pupil Personnel Team)," The Clearing House 54:348-349, April, 1981.

Brown outlined a month by month plan for retention. Concern about a student's progress was discussed by a personnel team. The team consisted of the classroom teacher, nurse, psychologist, reading specialist, counselor, and principal who understand various aspects of the child's lack of achievement. Concerns should be shared with the parents throughout the year with written records kept documenting lack of progress and reflecting all steps taken to assist the child. The plan prepared teachers and administrators to defend their position in favor of retention, alleviate parental opposition because of continuing communication, and increases the chance of doing what is best for the child. According to the author, the procedure is time consuming, but parents gain a real sense of sharing concern about their child's progress.

Graham, Donna R., An Investigation of Teachers' and Administrators' Attitudes Concerning the Promotion and Retention of Elementary Students, Educational Resources Information Center, Ed 215 433, Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of Educational Research Association, New York, March 19-23, 1982, 29 pp.

Graham based this study on personal interviews with teachers, counselors, and administrators from two elementary schools in the District of Columbia. The purpose of the study was to determine attitude on promotional policies after a change in 1976. Prior to that date, the 1967 policy was based on achievement with exceptions made for such factors as chronological age, low mental ability, and availability of services. After the competency based curriculum was instituted, a continuous progress plan went into effect. The interviews revealed problems with both policies because neither was clearly defined. There was great variation in interpretation and implementation of both policies which lead to the following recommendations: (1) Pilot testing of promotion policies; (2) Policies which demonstrate continuous non-mastery of skills and appropriate remediation; (3) Incremental implementation of policies to avoid large numbers of retained students. Graham concluded that if policies are not clearly defined, teachers draw on their own experience to establish individual policies.

Hagen, Janice Maahs, "I Kept 8 Students Back... And I'm Still Alive to Tell About It," Teacher 98:47-49, August, 1980.

Hagen reported the procedure and results of recommending retention for ten of 27 fourth grade students. Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills (CTBS) results were compiled and parents informed by individual conferences that any student not able to complete fourth grade work would be a candidate for retention. Each child's progress was charted weekly and reported to parents. Those below grade level worked with individual tutors. Daily homework assignments were given, beginning second semester which made parents more aware of difficulties. Following spring CTBS results, conferences were conducted with ten students being recommended for retention. Eight of the ten were retained. Four students became "solid" average students, three completed the work necessary for promotion, one moved. Social adjustment for the seven retainees was not a problem. One student who entered fifth grade against recommendation was retained a year later at parental request, the second went on to sixth grade as a part of the special education program.

Hallenbeck, Margaret J., "Considerations for Retention in the Elementary Grades," Kappa Delta Pi 62:66-69, February, 1981.

Hallenbeck argued that because there is no prescribed rate at which children learn, retention should not be ignored or mishandled. Parents often judge themselves by the achievements of their children. Parents need to see retention in a positive light and be supportive of the retention in order for it to be effective. Parents should not be told that a child's academic scores will be higher, but that maturation, emotional and social growth play a part in academic achievement. Hallenbeck felt a one-to-one conference with the retained child was necessary, emphasizing that the child had not failed. She advised that the child should make the room and/or teacher selection for the retained year. The family should be informed of all positive developments during the repeated year.

Jones, Larry D., and Sutherland, Harry, "Academic Redshirting: A Positive Approach to Grade Retention," Education 102:173-175, Winter, 1981.

Jones and Sutherland have proposed a program for retention that employs the "redshirting" procedure used in college athletics. College athletes are often redshirted for a year in order to improve skills or mature in much the same way an elementary school child would be retained. The major difference is that athletic programs are voluntary and are geared toward specific objectives. The program outlined changes the focus of retention from negative to positive by incorporating intensive in-service training for personnel including structural linguistics as it relates to redshirting, media campaigns, and educational screenings for redshirt candidates which determine learning problems and styles. The plan builds an educational program for the retention year and suggests means for evaluating the program.

Lieberman, Laurence M., "Decision-Making Model for In-Grade Retention (Nonpromotion)," Journal of Learning Disabilities 13:268-272, May, 1980.

The decision to retain or promote a child must be made on the basis of an in-depth analysis of all factors influencing each individual situation. According to Lieberman's model, these factors are grouped into three categories. Child factors include such considerations as psychosocial and neurological maturity, peer pressure, and ability to function independently. Family factors include attitude toward retention, geographical moves, and age of siblings. Some school factors are availability of personnel, the system's attitude toward retention and programmatic options. Four rankings are possible for each factor: For retention; against retention; undecided; and, not applicable. The factors are not weighted, but it is the student who gives weight to the factor.

Lindvig, Elise Kay, "Grade Retention: Evolving Expectations and Individual Differences," Clearing House 56:253-256, February, 1983.

Lindvig contended that in order to provide for the success of all students in mastery of subject matter, retention must be considered. Whatever the cause for lack of achievement, Lindvig urged viewing the whole child, tracing the child's school history, and exhausting all other alternatives before retention was suggested. If a child is a candidate for retention, the child's performance should be documented throughout the year. Comparisons should be made with the class average and parents informed well in advance if retention is a possibility. Specialized personnel should be enlisted to screen out factors which may need to be remedied outside the classroom. Other instructors should also view the child's performance. Retention should be viewed as an opportunity rather than a defeat.

Owen, Samuel A., and Ranick, Deborah L., "The Greensville Program: A Commonsense Approach to Basics," Phi Delta Kappan 58:531-533, March, 1977.

Owen and Ranick reported on the Greensville Program which was instituted in 1973 in the Greensville County Schools, Virginia. Prior to this time, students were promoted on the basis of criteria, and the system ranked in the 30th percentile on the Science Research Associates Test. The district rejected automatic promotions and based promotions entirely on the mastery of required skills. At the end of the 1973-74 year, 1,300 of 3,750 students were initially retained. Students were placed in classes different from those who were not repeating the grade, and a plan for partial promotion was included. Results recorded during the 1975-76 school year showed that 268 students were required to repeat a full grade, scores on achievement tests improved to the 50th percentile range, measured I.Q. scores showed gains, and the drop-out rate had fallen from 121 to 91. The stated goal of the program was to provide the best possible education and have a diploma stand for achievement.

Stevenson, Harold W., and others, "Predictive Value of Teacher's Ratings on Young Children," Journal of Educational Psychology 68:507-517, October, 1976.

This study compared teacher's ratings of kindergarten student's abilities, classroom skills, and personal-social characteristics to achievement in second and third grade. Teachers rated students on 13 variables at the kindergarten and second grade levels, and 18 variables at the third grade level. Students were evaluated twice in kindergarten, once after three months, and again at the end of the school year. After the first evaluation, teachers were able to make ratings that predicted performance over 40 months later. These predictions had an approximate .50 correlation with reading and arithmetic achievement scores. After the second rating, correlations were about .80 for reading and .70 for arithmetic. Ratings of cognitive abilities were most closely related to achievement scores.

SUMMARY

Research on the retention issue has been inconclusive. According to Jackson, the research design comparing retained students with promoted students was biased toward promotion. The design which compared retained students before and after retention, favored retention. The unbiased experimental design was rarely used.

Studies by Abidin, Golladay, and Haverton, Arthur, Coffield and Blommers, and Keys indicated that students did not benefit academically from retention. Retained students had a lower level of social acceptability according to studies by Anfinson, Bedoian, Morrison and Perry, and White and Howard. McElwee's results showed retained students were more indifferent toward schoolwork and less inclined to put forward good effort. Plumber found retained students receiving fewer rewards for the same behaviors as promoted students.

Ames contended that many studies showing harmful effects of retention were not valid. These studies had included students who had been retained for all reasons - low I.Q., emotional and social problems, and learning disabilities. Literature written by Ames and in conjunction with Gillespie and Scott pointed to the fact that immature students who were retained suffered no long-lasting social or emotional damage

and experienced a better atmosphere for academic achievement. Students who meet the entrance requirements for school may differ in age from their classmates by several months. They may also differ in readiness. This birthdate effect was studied by DiPasquale, Moule and Flewelling. The birthdate effect was most apparent in boys with academic problems in the primary grades.

Chase found that 94 per cent of primary students who were retained on the basis of immaturity had no, or only temporary emotional upset because of repeating. Finalyson and Sandoval found improved self-concepts among retained first graders during the repeating year.

Kerzner, Lobdell, Reinherz and Griffin, Chansky and Chase found improved academic achievement among repeating students. Kerzner found retention academically advantageous for all grades one through five. Repeating students in grades one, two, and three benefited the most. Chase and Reinherz and Griffin studied students in the primary grades and found retention most beneficial for first graders. Stringer's study indicated a child gained academically from repeating a grade if achievement scores were 1.0 to 1.9 years below grade level before retention (grades one and two, a lag of 0.3 and 0.7 respectively) and a progress rate of less than 50 per cent of normal.

Considerations for retentions must be discussed with parents. Ames stated that a student's reaction to retention depended on how the adults involved handled it. The parents need to view retention as a positive step so the child will not view it as a punishment. The importance of communications between school and home was emphasized in Hagen's article describing the retention of eight students.

Graham discussed the importance of establishing a promotion policy. Lack of guidelines allowed teachers to establish individual policy based on experience, and inconsistencies resulted. Jones and Sutherland suggested a "redshirting" approach to retention similar to ones used in college athletics. Part of this plan was a media campaign to emphasize the positive aspects of the retention program. The Greensville Program described by Owen and Ranick also included advising the public of the changing promotion policy.

Stevenson and others found that teachers' ratings offer a valid means of predicting scholastic success. While the classroom teacher is responsible for initiating retention procedures, Lindvig and Brown recommended involving all concerned parties. That included teachers, parents, administrators, psychologists, counselors, and nurses. They also advised documenting where weaknesses lie and what has been done to alleviate the problems. Lindvig suggested that

it would be beneficial for other teachers to observe the child's overall performance. Hallenbeck stressed the importance of also meeting with the student involved. Enlisting the support of all available personnel seemed imperative when Lieberman's extensive list of variables pertaining to home, school, and child are to be considered for analysis. The final placement must create the most favorable learning situation for the student in question.

CONCLUSIONS

The identification of students who would benefit from retention must be made on an individual basis. The studies reviewed offered no definitive evidence that a strict policy of social promotion or retention is preferable. No rigid policy will suffice when the multitude of variables affecting student achievement is considered.

Even those researchers who found retention harmful indicated that some students gained from repeating a year. The problem then facing educators is to decide which students will benefit from retention.

Research indicated that the following factors were associated with successful retentions:

Parental support for the retention

Chronological or developmental immaturity

Normal intelligence

Good social and emotional adjustment

Average academic skills

Academic achievement between 1.0 and 1.9 years below grade level and a progress rate less than half of normal (first grade, 0.3 years below level, second grade, 0.7 years below level).

The earlier in a student's school career the retention occurs, the more effective it will be academically and less damaging socially. Students in the primary grades gained more from retention than those in the upper elementary. First

grade students showed greater gains than second and third grade students.

Once the possibility of retention has been identified by the teacher, parents, and all available personnel should be included in the final decision. Reasons for suggesting the retention should be documented as well as all measures taken to remedy existing weaknesses.

Communication among school, home, and the student involved is crucial. The decision to retain should never be an easy one. How a retention is presented will greatly affect the success of the future placement.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that retention be considered a viable alternative in meeting the needs of low-achieving students.

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